

THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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 JUN 16 2008
 HED SINCE 1877

HED SINCE 1877

JUNE 5, 2008

VOL. 132

No. 23



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

North Delta's Lenair building ministry

By William H. Perkins Jr.
 Editor

Robert Lenair was a little more than surprised when he was elected moderator of North Delta Association in Clarksdale. "Astonished would be a good word, but then I was astonished when I was elected vice-moderator before that," said the first African-American pastor to serve in both roles in the history of Baptist associational missions in Mississippi, which dates to 1806.

Born on the Fourth of July, the bivocational pastor of New Strangers Rest Church in Dundee is proud of his all-American Delta roots. "Born and raised in Lula, Mississippi," he boasts.

In addition to Coahoma County where Clarksdale is situated, North Delta Association includes Quitman County to the east and Tunica County to the north. A total of 30 churches are members of North Delta Association, and eight of those churches are predominantly African-American.

"Yes, I've been asked by both white and black people why I would want to get involved with a predominantly white Baptist association. This is the Mississippi Delta, you know," said Lenair, who also serves as a corporal in the Tunica County Sheriff's Department.

Lenair said he was initially drawn to the association by the enormous amount of resources he found available through the association from the Mississippi Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention — most notably the widely-acclaimed Vacation Bible School curriculum, but also the sheer number of aids for the development of church programs and the support that comes with those aids.

"My church was led to join the association because of their resources for equipping the saints," he said, but Lenair also credited M.C. Johnson, longtime executive director of the association, for playing a critical role in his decision to join.

"M.C. sees people, not colors. That inspired me," Lenair said. "He came to my church, spent time with us, and just loved us into the association."

Lenair has been an active part of the association for nine years. In addition to his terms as moderator and vice-moderator, he has served as missions development chairman and in a number of other roles.

His wife of 33 years, Loretta, has been his partner in associational work and has herself served the association in a number of ways including as chairman of the family ministry program, he said. The couple have three sons and a daughter.



MEETING NEEDS — Robert Lenair (second from right) of Lula, moderator for North Delta Association in Clarksdale, pitches in to help sort donated items at the association's headquarters. Lenair, pastor of New Strangers Rest Church in Dundee, is the first African-American moderator in the history of Baptist associational missions in Mississippi. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Lenair surrendered to the Christian ministry in 1989 and was ordained in 1990. He served as pastor of a Missionary Baptist church before pastoring churches that are now members of North Delta Association. He has taken classes through the Southern Baptist Convention's Seminary Extension for six years.

Lenair was instrumental in starting the jail ministry in Tunica County under the administration of current Sheriff K.C. Hamp — "a God-fearing man," he said — and there are presently six ministers involved in that ministry.

"The atmosphere is better in a jail with a strong Christian ministry, and the inmates are better prepared when they have to go down the road," he said.

By "down the road," Lenair means the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman in Sunflower County, just south of North Delta Association.

Lenair said his reception as leader of the association has been "great," from both black and white Baptists involved in the association's work. "On a scale of one to ten, I'd rate it a nine-and-a-half," he pointed out.

When Johnson introduced him from the podium to messengers attending the 2007 Mississippi Baptist Convention in Jackson, Lenair was honored with a standing ovation. He was visibly moved by the show of support.

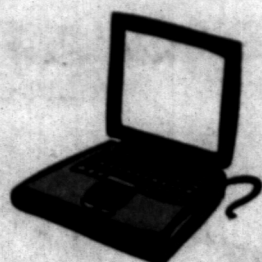
Still, his involvement in the association hasn't been without apprehension on the part of some people, Lenair said.

"The injustices of the past have made some black people skeptical, and white people are anxious, too, about the changes that are taking place around them. That's all understandable," he said, "but when black people see my church developing they wonder what's going on, and when white people see my heart they know my intention is to bring us together for the Lord's work."

Lenair cites statistics on the declining population of white Deltans as a sign that the role of black churches in Mississippi Baptist associational work will continue to grow. "I see churches in the future that will have a 50% white, 50% black membership, possibly 60% black and 40% white," he said.

Southern Baptist Convention studies in recent years have pointed out that virtually all the growth in the convention is occurring in the convention's ethnic churches. Lenair wants to harness that momentum to make a difference for the Lord.

"We need to forget about color and do what the Lord called us to do," he said. "Love draws people together. When people see love among us, they'll see no differences between us. When that happens, there's no limit to what we can do."



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Send news, communication, and
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VOLUME 132 • NUMBER 23
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4
and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street,
Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$9.35 per
year payable in advance. Economy plans
available for cooperating Mississippi churches.
Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS.
Member, Association of State Baptist Papers.
Deadlines: News items — one calendar
week prior to requested publication date.
Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to
requested publication date. All submissions
are subject to editing.

The face of marriage in America

On a warm, windswept Saturday, a young bride and groom were married in a Mississippi Baptist church. It was a scene undoubtedly repeated many times on that Saturday in many other venues around the country, but we seem to never grow tired of this age-old celebration of unending love and lifetime commitment.

The ceremony began, right on time. The bride was radiant; the groom was beaming. Within minutes, they were no longer two individuals but one entity in the eyes of God. The ensuing reception in the church's Family Life Center featured the finest white tablecloths on which food and drink were placed from one end of the building to the other.

A good time was had by all. At the end the newlyweds headed off for their week-long honeymoon cruise and, beyond that, into a lifetime of love and devotion. The challenges of marriage and the tragedies of life will have to be faced down the road, but all of that can be put aside for this brief, shining moment when God is on His

throne and everything is right with the world.

The wedding ceremony is important to us, because it is symbolic of how seriously we take the concept of marriage. That's the real reason we travel great distances and go to such great expense to be a part of such weddings.

There are people in the America of today, however, who would degrade the God-ordained marital union of one man and one woman for life. There are those who would have us believe that marriage is not special or God-ordained at all, but rather a common "commitment" or "union" between people of whatever genders and sexual preferences suit them at the moment.

There are political, judicial, and cultural leaders in America who shamelessly excuse such sinful and immoral behavior and even boast of their efforts to normalize perverse relationships (Romans 1:32). Commentators have begun to observe that future generations of Americans will likely have a completely different concept of marriage than we do today.

In the world of tomorrow, marriage will mean anything anyone wants it to mean. Homosexual and lesbian marriage will have the same status as heterosexual marriage, but so will marriages between multiple partners, simultaneous marriages, and marriages between adults and children. There may even be legally-recognized marriages between humans and animals. (Don't laugh; who would have thought we would have gone as far as we have?)

This is merely one battle among many in the war with the secularists and elitists who would destroy foundational institutions like marriage and the way of life that goes with it, simply so that they can live as they please. However, the American people aren't buying it. A New York Times/CBS News poll indicates that the American people are very much in favor of protecting the traditional understanding of marriage.

The poll indicates that Americans oppose legalized same-sex marriages by 61%-34%, and support a constitutional amendment to enshrine the traditional understanding of marriage (55%-40%). Obviously, our liberal leaders are out of step with the Americans they are supposed to be leading.

AN ASTEROID ZOOMS BY

SO THAT'S THE
PLACE HEAVEN IS
SO CONCERNED
ABOUT!

Christians must get involved to have their voices heard on this matter. Otherwise, we will be relegated to the fringes as we have been on so many other important issues of our day.

First, let us get our own marriages in order. It is embarrassing and shameful that the divorce rate among Christians is just as high as it is for non-Christians. Only if we practice what we preach when it comes to marriage will people start to pay attention.

The concept of marriage is worth the fight. May we not fail at this crucial task.

GUEST OPINION:

*Your tax rebate:
spend, save, share*

By Daniel Hall, Exec. Director
Miss. Baptist Foundation



During May, approximately 130 million taxpayers began receiving tax rebate checks from the IRS totaling well over \$100 billion. These rebates are part of an economic stimulus package that President Bush signed into law in February.

While many people will stimulate the economy by buying consumer products such as new televisions or furniture, others will use their tax rebate to pay off existing debt or increase their rainy day fund.

Beyond the possibility of stimulating the economy and reducing personal debt, these IRS checks provide a unique window of opportunity to excel in the grace of giving. Two recent polls determined that three to four percent of taxpayers who received a rebate planned to donate this extra money to charity.

Contributing tax rebates to Baptist causes is a good option since these rebates are not reportable as income for federal tax purposes, but they are deductible when contributed as charitable gifts. Here is an example:

Mr. and Mrs. Baptist anticipate receiving \$1,200 as a tax rebate. If

this couple decides to save their rebate, they might earn less than two percent in a savings account or two to four percent with a certificate of deposit. However, if they decide to make a charitable gift with the rebate, they'll enjoy a return of up to 25% on their money.

How is this possible? Well, Mr. and Mrs. Baptist do not have to report the rebate as taxable income. However, if they make a charitable contribution with the \$1,200, they can deduct this amount on their 2008 tax return. Because Mr. and Mrs. Baptist are in a 25% tax bracket and itemize their deductions, this gift results in a \$300 tax savings. Thus, Mr. and Mrs. Baptist enjoy a \$1,500 benefit from their rebate — \$1,200 donated to

Kingdom causes plus the \$300 in tax savings resulting from their gift. Additional benefit may be forthcoming in the form of state income tax savings.

Perhaps you could use your rebate check to benefit a special ministry of your church. You may want to use your rebate to provide for missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, the Annie Armstrong Offering for North American missions, or the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering.

Maybe you could use your rebate check to make a gift for retired Southern Baptist minis-

ters and their spouses through the "Mission: Dignity" program offered by Guidestone Financial Resources, or perhaps your tax rebate check could be utilized to enhance the ministry of the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village or provide much-needed scholarship funds for students attending our Mississippi Baptist institutions of higher learning: Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain, Mississippi College in Clinton, or William Carey University in Hattiesburg.

The window of opportunity through which you can use your tax rebate check for God's Kingdom is wide open to spend some, save some, and share some. Your friends at the Mississippi Baptist Foundation stand ready to come alongside of you as "laborers together with God" as you continue to excel in the grace of giving and experience showers of blessing from above.

For more information, contact the Mississippi Baptist Foundation at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3210 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 210. E-mail: dhall@mbcb.org. Web site: msbaptistfoundation.org.

Same-sex 'weddings' gain support in N.Y.

ALBANY, N.Y. (BP and local reports) — Same-sex couples in two of the nation's most populous states, New York and California, will be celebrating what likely would be thousands of "weddings" this summer if a directive by the New York governor stands and a much-criticized ruling by the California Supreme Court goes into effect.

New York Gov. David A. Paterson, a Democrat, has ordered state agencies to revise their policies and begin recognizing homosexual marriages from other jurisdictions, such as California, Massachusetts, and Canada. The Alliance Defense Fund, a pro-family legal firm, is expected to file a lawsuit next week against the governor, arguing his action is unconstitutional.

Nevertheless, if his order — coupled with the California decision — stands, then homosexual marriages in the nation's first and third most populous states would be the focus of nationwide attention this summer, months before a presidential election.

Janet McKee, chief of California's office of vital records, sent out an order May 28 saying that same-sex couples in that state could begin "marrying" June 17, unless the California Supreme Court delays its ruling from going into effect until after the November election when citizens there likely will consider a constitutional marriage amendment.

McKee's order also gave the OK to begin using new forms that change "Bride" and "Groom" to instead say "Party A" and "Party B."

The Associated Press reported Friday that the attorneys general of 10 states have joined other parties in asking the California Supreme Court to stay the decision until after the election. The states say they have an interest in the case because they would have to determine if their respective state recognized the mar-

riage licenses. The states are Alaska, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Utah.

Mathew D. Staver, an attorney with the pro-family group Liberty Counsel, predicted that it would be a big victory for same-sex couples if everything stands as is.

"The problem... [is that] California doesn't have a residency requirement," Staver said during a panel discussion May 29 at the National Press Club in Washington hosted by the Family Research Council, "so once this becomes effective — if there's no stay in California — that means that someone in New York can fly over to California, get a same-sex marriage license and then fly back to New York, and now [the license] all of a sudden is recognized."

Critics of Paterson's directive point out that in 2006 New York's highest court refused to legalize homosexual marriage, and that last year a homosexual marriage bill failed to make it through the state legislature.

Paterson's action could "open up a floodgate to do indirectly what the court of New York says is not permitted," Staver said.

Glen Lavy of the Alliance Defense Fund called Paterson's directive "outrageous" and said the governor is "trying to circumvent the... the democratic process." Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, agreed. Both men made their comments at the National Press Club.

"Clearly the people of New York, through their elected representatives, do not support same-sex marriage," Perkins said. "The courts have not supported same-sex marriage, but you have the new governor using a bypass of the process to recognize these same-sex marriages."

Paterson, the lt. governor who succeeded the disgraced former Gov. Eliot Spitzer after he was

accused of patronizing a prostitute — and has himself admitted to extramarital relationships — defended his directive by pointing to a state appeals court ruling that said the state must recognize out-of-state marriages.

The problem with Paterson's logic, conservative attorneys said, is that the state's highest court has yet to rule on the issue and that other lawsuits on the matter are still working their way through the court system.

Republican State Sen. Joseph L. Bruno, the majority leader of the New York Senate and temporary president of that body after Paterson vacated the lt. governor's office, hinted that he is considering legal action himself. "There's a constitutional question here," he said at a press conference, according to The New York Times.

Meanwhile, a new poll in California shows that citizens there oppose a proposed constitutional marriage amendment — a polling result in direct conflict with an earlier poll.

The Field Poll asked the amendment question two different ways to two different groups but got similar results, both showing opposition to the proposal. It was conducted May 17-26 among 1,052 registered voters. By a 54-40% margin, voters were opposed to the amendment when asked, "Do you favor or oppose changing the California State Constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman, thus barring marriage between gay and lesbian couples?"

By a 51-43% margin, voters were opposed to it when asked this way, "There may be a vote on this issue in the November election. Would you favor or oppose having the state constitution prohibit same-sex marriage, by defining marriage as only between a man and a woman?"

A Los Angeles Times/KTLA poll had the opposite result, with 54% supporting the amendment and 35% opposing it. It was conducted May 20-21 among 705 registered voters and asked, "A proposed amendment to the state's Constitution that may appear on the November ballot would reverse the court's deci-

sion and state that marriage is only between a man and a woman. If the election were held today, would you vote for or against the amendment?"

Additionally, the Field Poll showed that voters were favoring the court's opinion by a 48-46% margin. That question asked, "Do you approve or disapprove of the recent California State Supreme Court ruling declaring the state's ban on same-sex marriage as being unconstitutional, thus allowing same-sex couples to marry?"

Again, the LA Times poll showed the opposite result, with 52% opposing the decision and 41% supporting it. That question asked, "Do you approve or disapprove of the California Supreme Court's decision last week to allow same-sex marriage in California?"

The Family Research Council's Perkins said that despite conflicting polling data, he is confident that a majority of Californians support the marriage amendment.

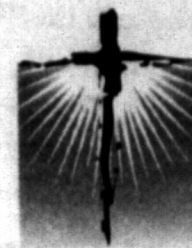
"Marriage amendments... historically underpoll," he said. "On average, they underpoll six to eight percent."

Amendments underpoll, Perkins said, because people are afraid to state their true opinions about homosexual marriage out of fear they'll be viewed as or called bigoted or homophobic.

"When they go into the secrecy of the voting booth... Americans have overwhelmingly... supported traditional marriage between a man and a woman," he said.

One example of underpolling took place in California in 2000 when the Field Poll examined voters' opinions on Proposition 22 — the same law that was struck down stating that marriage is between a man and a woman. The final Field Poll had it passing with 53% of the vote. On Election Day, it passed with 61% of the vote.

There are other examples of underpolling. A Wisconsin amendment in 2006 polled anywhere from 48-51% in pre-election polls but passed 59-41%, and an Oregon amendment in 2004 polled around 50% but passed 56-44%.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

JUNE 5, 2008

VOL. 132

No. 23

Senate subsidizes abortion

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Senate has approved price breaks for the country's leading abortion provider in legislation funding American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. As part of a war supplemental spending bill, senators voted 75-22 for an amendment that included the reinstitution of government subsidies for Planned Parenthood clinics and university and community health centers, according to Congressional Quarterly. Before the Senate recessed for Memorial Day, it passed the war spending bill to which the amendment was attached. The war funding legislation now is pending in the House of Representatives. The subsidies would aid an abortion rights organization that already is benefiting greatly from government funds. Planned Parenthood, which surpassed one billion dollars in annual revenue for the first time last year, received more than \$336 million of that total in government grants and contracts. In 2006, it recorded \$112 million in profit. Ironically, the government funding Planned Parenthood receives aids it at least indirectly to support political activity. The Wall Street Journal reported Planned Parenthood is contributing an unprecedented \$10 million to various political campaigns this election cycle.

Looking back

10 years ago

Fourteen students from Blue Mountain College, along with BSU director Tracy Moser and her mother Betty Simmons, spend their spring break in a Rio de Janeiro slum, making evangelistic visits and sharing with children.

20 years ago

Former national WMU president Helen Fling reports the WMU centennial celebration was divinely timed in response to the current Southern Baptist Convention controversy.

50 years ago

Major airlines ask the Civil Aeronautics Board for permission to hold a joint meeting to discuss discounts in passenger fares, including the controversial issue of whether they will adopt 50% reductions for the clergy.



**YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!**

*Simply share the following prayer
with God in your own words:*

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my
sins and freedom from eternal
death. (*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my
sins and to restore my rela-
tionship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus
Christ into my life. From this
time on, I want to live in a lov-
ing relationship with Him. (*I
receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.*)

*"But as many as received him,
to them he gave the right to become
children of God, even to those who
believe in his name." (John 1:12)*

*If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact a
local Baptist church for spiritu-
al guidance.*

BEING BULLHEADED CAN COST YOU

Bullheadedness is a Southern colloquial expres-
sion, but the action that it is
describing can be seen in vir-
tually every culture and in
every state and village across
the land. Synonyms of bull-
headed might be words like
stubborn, hardheaded, con-
trary, unyielding, and obsti-
nate. Bullheaded people are
found everywhere. You can
see them in the home, at work,
at school, on the athletic field,
and in social settings. It is
strange that there are people
for whom bullheadedness is
the most significant feature
about them. Even stranger is
the fact that some people
seem to delight in that being
characteristic of who they are.
Now to be honest I have
known some really fine peo-
ple who were bullheaded. I
have also known some bull-
headed people who nobody
wanted to be around. In fact,
if the truth be known, some of
the things that seem to be
marks of bullheadedness are
that it creates barriers, usually
hurts feelings, seems to ostracize
others, and isolates you.

With all of that said, it is
important I tell you that prob-
ably all of us from time to
time have a reoccurring
streak of bullheadedness that
comes out — men, women,
young people, and you can

even see it in two-year olds.
All of us seem to have fits and
spurts of being bullheaded.
Bullheadedness is not a trait
that is becoming to believers.
In fact, if you will look close-
ly at what the Spirit of God is
supposed to be creating in us
— love, joy, peace, long-suf-
fering, gentleness, and meek-
ness — it doesn't seem to fit
in with what we are supposed
to be. Oftentimes we try to
wrap our bullheadedness in
what we may call convictions,
righteous indignation, or sim-
ply being uncompromising in
our faith. Yet it usually lives
itself out in being what it is:
bullheadedness. It nearly
always costs you.

The other day I was told
about an incident of signifi-
cant hardheadedness that
actually took place. It was in
a far away place and the per-
son shall forever remain
nameless. A man and his wife
were going down to the lake
to fish. A small little road
went out across the pasture
area. In the pasture was an
old bull. On this particular

day, the bull was not going to
let the folks in their Jeep pass
by. He was standing in the
road refusing to budge. The
man honked and hollered but
the bull did not move. The
man was determined to move
the bull and so he eased on up
to bump the old bull. All he
did was succeed in making
the bull mad. The bull turned
and charged at the Jeep. The
man determined that he was
not going to put up with that
so he charged back at the bull.
The man and his Jeep were
determined not to allow the
bullheaded bull to win. Back
and forth, they went at it and
finally the man ran over the
bull. He broke the bull's neck,
but in the process got his Jeep
stuck on top of the bull. He
could not get his Jeep off. He
had to call a wrecker to come
and get his Jeep off the bull.
The bull died because of his
hardheadedness.

The story was not over. The
bullheaded bull was not his bull.
Because of the confrontation and
subsequent victory he had
achieved, he got the privilege of

paying for the expensive bull. I
am telling you, being bullheaded
will nearly always cost you more
than you ever thought it could.

I have seen that very same
spirit demonstrated in family
relationships. I have seen it in
churches. I have seen parents
and children exhibit it. I have
seen it among friends.
Sometimes it is just an
encounter, a bump, and folks
go on their way. At other
times it costs, and costs, and
costs. Maybe the Apostle Paul
had seen the doctrine of bull-
headedness alive and well in
the church when he gave that
heavenly word of advice in
Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye
kind one to another, tender-
hearted, forgiving one another,
even as God for Christ's
sake hath forgiven you."

We can learn some impor-
tant lessons from the
encounter between the bull
and the Jeep:

- If you will have a little
patience, usually the bull will
get out of the way.

- If you decide to get into a
"butting match," somebody is
going to lose.

- Often overlooked is the
fact that even when you win,
you may lose.

In the long run, bullhead-
edness rarely wins, and kind-
ness and tenderness almost
always carry the day.

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

June 5, 2008

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

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prccbsu@bellsouth.net

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601-276-2012
smccbsu@bellsouth.net

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
662-234-9366
mobaker@olemiss.edu

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
601-264-5160
Lloyd.Lunceford@usm.edu

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY
601-318-6161
tim.glaze@wmcarey.edu

For more info:
Contact the
Collegiate
Ministry
Department at
1-800-748-1651

MISSISSIPPI
We're there!



TOUR SCHEDULE

Wednesday, June 11, 2008, 6:30 P.M.
Indian Springs Baptist Church, Laurel

Thursday, June 12, 2008, 6:30 P.M.
Poplar Springs Drive Baptist Church, Meridian

Friday, June 13, 2008, 6:30 P.M.
First Baptist Church, Amory

Saturday, June 14, 2008, 6:00 P.M.
Cleary Baptist Church, Florence

Sunday, June 15, 2008, 10:30 A.M.
First Baptist Church, Summit

Monday, June 16, 2008, 2:15 P.M.
First Baptist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana
Southern Baptist Church Music Conference

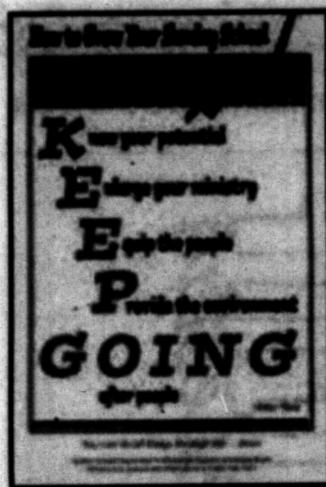
Monday, June 16, 2008, 5:00 P.M.
Washington Park, New Orleans, Louisiana

Tuesday, June 17, 2008, 6:30 P.M.
First Baptist Church, Jackson

For more info, contact the Church Music
Department at 601-292-3274, 1-800-748-1651, ext.
274, or E-mail scluttrell@mbcb.org

FLAKE'S FORMULA Super Saturday SUNDAY SCHOOL CONFERENCE

- * New Teachers
- * Advanced Teachers
- * Evangelism



**THIS YEAR'S
THEME**
FELLOWSHIP:
How to
enrich the
congregation and
reach the
community
through
PURPOSEFUL
FELLOWSHIP

Saturday, July 19
First Baptist Church, Pontotoc

Saturday, July 26
First Baptist Church, Richland

9:00 a.m. Opening Session
9:15 Session 1
Flake's Formula
and Fellowship
11:15 Electives
Noon Dismiss

* Elective conferences
in every age group!

For more information, contact the Sunday
School Department at 601-292-3291 or
1-800-748-1651 or E-mail cday@mbcb.org

Each Participant will receive:

- Specific ideas on how FELLOWSHIP can strengthen your Sunday School and help reach your community for Christ
- Age graded conferences for every leader
- The complete book, *Flake's Formula for the Future*

Glorieta on the Gulf

GROWING CHURCHES

The Acts 1:8 Revolution - Transform Our World

AUGUST 15-16
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BILOXI

TRAINING TRACKS:

Pastor/Church Leadership Teams
Discipleship & Family Ministry
Bible Study Ministry
Preschool
Children
Youth
Adults
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Innovative Ministry

For more information,
contact:
Gulf Coast Association
228-832-4311 or

MBCB
Discipleship and Family
Ministry Department
1-800-748-1651, ext. 373
or 601-292-3373

Discipleship
Rallies



CHILDREN'S RALLY

FBC East
(Downtown
Facility), Brandon
Sunday
August 17, 6 p.m.
Entertainment
John Yates



YOUTH RALLY

FBC, Pearl
Sunday
August 17, 6 p.m.
Speaker
Tom Richter
Worship
Chris Layton



ADULT RALLY

Meadow Grove BC
Brandon
Sunday
August 17, 6 p.m.
Music
This Hope



Your Margaret Lacey girls sent nearly 1,800 girls to Gateway Camp and Conference Center last summer, where 58 children made professions of faith. Encourage your church to support the state missions offering this fall.

Pastor & Wife RETREAT

July 17-19

Lake Tiak O'Khata
Louisville

The Miracle
Marriage

"Providing a time of encouragement,
inspiration and fellowship for the
pastor and his wife"

The total cost for the first 20
couples who register
will be reduced by \$75!



Edwin &
Joan Jenkins

For more information, call Pastor/Leadership Development,
(601) 292-3305 or 1-800-748-1651

The Minister's Health

Three Critical Concepts to Change Your Ministry

July 28
Tri-County
Association Office
Columbia

July 29
North Oxford-BC
Oxford

S P E A K E R
Barney Self, Ed. D.
Licensed marriage
and family therapist



SCHEDULE

8:45 a.m.	Welcome
9 a.m.	Compassion Fatigue and Boundaries
10:30 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.	Margins
noon	Dismiss

TO REGISTER:
Contact Kay McDonnell:
at 1.800.748.1651, ext. 305
601.292.3305,
E-mail: kmcdonnell@mbcb.org.

State Literacy Missions Conference

July 17-19, Crossgates BC, Brandon

Called to Love – Matthew 22:37-39



Seminars for those already working in a literacy ministry or wanting to begin.

BASIC WORKSHOPS IN:

- ARW (Adult Reading & Writing)
- ESL (English as a Second Language)
- TCY (Tutoring Children and/or Youth)
- EFL (English as a Foreign Language)
- CBS (Chronological Bible Storying)

EXPERIENCED LEADERS CONFERENCES will be offered

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Gayle Leininger, recently retired NAMB Literacy Missions Missionary
Kendale Moore, current NAMB Literacy Missions Missionary

REGISTRATION DEADLINE, JULY 3

For more information and registration form contact:
Paula Smith, MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205
psmith@mbcb.org or 1-800-748-1651

SMALL/BIVOCATIONAL CHURCH PASTOR'S WORKSHOP

Monday, June 30	Tuesday, July 1
Auburn BC	Easthaven BC
Tupelo	Brookhaven

LEADERSHIP:
The Jonathan Model, I Samuel 14

- Effective Leaders*
- Recognize Priority
 - Understand Reality
 - Make Decisions
 - Develop Plans

Barry Campbell
Director, Eastern Region, LifeWay Christian
Resources, Southern Baptist Convention

FOR MORE INFO Contact Kay McDonnell
at 1.800.748.1651, ext. 305, 601.292.3305, E-mail: kmcdonnell@mbcb.org.

THIS YEAR'S SKILLSHOPS

Professional Certification

and
SkillShops

August 12-14, 2008

Watch for info ...
coming soon

Sponsored by:
Pastor Leadership
Development Dept.

All Because of JESUS

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST YOUTH NIGHT



FRANCIS CHAN
GUEST SPEAKER



STEVE FEE
WORSHIP LEADER

July 18, 2008

Mississippi Coliseum, 6:30 p.m.
Doors open at 5:45 p.m.
No cost • No registration • Free will contribution
For more info, contact the Evangelism Department: 601-292-3280
1-800-748-1651, ext. 280 or E-mail: jellis@mbcb.org

Pray this day for...

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

June 6-19, 2008

Pray for the 117 new missionaries and chaplains commissioned by the North American Mission Board on May 19 at the River Oaks Baptist Church in Chesapeake, Va.

(1) WMU, SBC Annual Missions Celebration, Indianapolis, Ind. (WMU); (2) Pray for wisdom for believers in Malaysia as God moves families to various locations within the country. As partnerships of believers are formed, pray that God will be the center. Pray that believers would be willing to follow God wherever and with whomever He has ordained.

(1) FATHER'S DAY; (2) Baptist Men's Day (MM Emphasis); (3) You can be a part of South Asia's ministry in India just by taking a few minutes to talk to those "annoying telemarketers." Their soul is in peril. So next time you see that "unknown name, unknown number" phone call scroll across your caller ID box, ask God to prepare you to be His witness.

(1) Youth Week, 9th-13th, Central Hills Baptist Retreat (MM); (2) GA Summer Camp, 9th-13th, Garaywa (WMU); (3) II Summer Youth Camp, 9th-13th, Raymond (SS); (4) Mississippi Baptist All-State Youth Choir & Orchestra Rehearsal Camp & Tour, 9th-17th, William Carey University, Hattiesburg/Mississippi churches (CM).

(1) Children's Mission Camp (Coed), Central Hills Baptist Retreat, Kosciusko, 16th-18th (MM); (2) GA Summer Camp, Garaywa, 16th-20th (WMU).

(1) Southern Baptist Convention, Indianapolis, Ind.; (2) Pray for wisdom and quick acquisition of video skills in the Pacific Rim areas. Ask God to call videographers to the Pacific Rim. Pray for wisdom to use the right level of technology to tell our Pacific Rim stories effectively.

(1) IV Summer Youth Camp, Hinds Community College, Raymond, 17th-21st (SS); (2) Ask God to guide R as he has agreed to begin working in the new area of India (KOLKATA). Ask God to guide R as he starts to follow up with some people who received a DVD of the Jesus film. Ask God to open homes for him to share Christ and for future churches.

When Jesus returned to His hometown, He was met with unbelief. For a people group, the homeland is where their cultural and religious beliefs remain most firmly intact. Access has been very difficult to the Tag people. A door opened recently for 3 Tags to return to their homeland carrying truth in their hearts. Pray that the door will stay open.

In November, many began praying for a missionary apprentice who had experienced a seizure and needed to go to a nearby country for more testing. He reports: "I am following God's lead and have asked for a medical transfer which is probably months away. Pray for God's guidance as to the exact location where He wants me next."

Snow filling the streets of Moscow is usually removed as soon as it hits the ground by street cleaners, young men who have left their homes in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries. They work 12+ hours per day, seven days a week. Most are lonely and looking for purpose in life. Pray that they will hear the Good News.

(1) Children's Mission Camp (Coed), Central Hills, 19th-21st (MM); (2) More than 30 unreached people groups are scattered over Dagestan, the "Land of Mountains," in southern Russia. Only 8 percent of the 2.5-million people there are Russian. Dagestan is the center of Islam in Russia. Pray that villagers of Dagestan will understand that Jesus is the fulfillment of their culture, not its destroyer.

Pray for students of a small "jungle school" in SE Asia to be blessed with an improved classroom building, basic textbooks, and other much needed resources, and the opportunity to hear and respond to the greatest story ever told. Pray that students will be a channel of blessing as they share Truth with their families.

A group of teenage girls in Kenya at a camp for internally Displaced People (IDP) stated, "We've started our own gang." They were "ganging up" for protection against rape. Pray that the peace talks will result in an end to the attacks that many Kenyans are facing. Pray that talks will lead to changes for economic and political stability.

Bangladesh - "All I have to do is give the word, and 50,000-100,000 Chakmas will convert to Christianity," said a political leader of the Chakmas, "but first I need assurance from you that we will have political protection and social security." The Christian replied, "I have no political influence, no military power and no financial wealth, but I can introduce you to the Lord who can set you free."



"Called to Love" Our Schools-Prayerwalk!



If you would like to receive information sheets on Prayerwalking Local Schools for Principals, for Pastors and for Participants, call 601.292.3324 or E-mail KBurns@mbcb.org. Order Prayerwalking Key Chains from www.prayerclosetministries.org or call Kevin Meador, 601.635.2180.

Teacher Appreciation & Prayerwalk Sunday, July 27, 2008

- Conduct a commitment service during the morning worship for school teachers and administrators.
- Pray and commission teachers and administrators as they begin the new school year.
- Request specific prayer needs from school administrators and teachers.
- Meet at the church on Sunday afternoon to prayer-walk and/or prayer drive around the area schools.
- Share the prayerwalk experiences during the evening worship.

FOR ALL BOYS AND GIRLS WHO HAVE COMPLETED GRADES 3-7



Cost \$95
with
\$50 deposit
due with
preregistration

Bible study, Bible memorization, Bible skill, worship, campfire service, morning watch, time with Southern Baptist missionaries, horseback riding, rifle range [safety/marks-manship], swimming, canoeing, four-square ... and much more!

Each church group must have an adult male counselor for every six boys (or portion thereof) and an adult female counselor for every six girls (or portion thereof). Campers are together with the counselors from their church all during camp.

Camp begins with check-in at 2 p.m., Monday, June 30, and ends at noon on Wednesday, July 2.

For more info, contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, 601-292-3287 or dhicks@mbcb.org

8/9/03
Mr. Jadon Yeager
Parents: Tommy & Jennifer, Last Frontier

8/19/91
Miss Alisha Austin
Parents: Arnold & Susie, South America

8/25/98
Mr. Caleb Simpson
Parents: Adam & Kristen, Central & Eastern Europe

8/26/94
Miss Kati Cunningham
Parents: Paul & Keri, South America

8/27/00
Mr. Benton Hewitt, III
Parents: Earl & Ramona, West Africa

FOR SECURITY,
cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: Child's name, Parent's name, MBCB wMu MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205

PLEASE NOTE:
Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the wMu.

HOUSE TOPS

BIBLE DRILL

1. **First Church, Okolona**, recognizes its Bible drillers: Hannah Henry and Mary Clark Herrod.
2. **South Louisville Church, Louisville** recognizes its youth Bible drillers: Dinah Smith, leader; Madison Mills, Elizabeth Ragan, Brandon Hemphill, Emily Davis, Jenna Lovorn, and Zachary Allen.



1. First Church, Okolona



2. South Louisville Church, Louisville

In God We Trust Tour

July 11-19, 2008
(reg. by May 31)

U.S. Capitol, Whitehouse (outside), Pentagon, Marine Corp Band at Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian, Union Station, Mt. Vernon, Supreme Court, Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials, Vietnam and Korean War Memorials, two Jima & WWII Memorials, Colonial Williamsburg, Fogo de Chao, and much more!

9 days/8 nights

\$1500 dbl. ALL costs included.

PURPOSE DRIVEN TOURS

A Mississippi owned Christian Company
Call 601-371-8733 for brochure or info

OTHER 2008 TOURS

July	11-19	Washington DC & Williamsburg
July	30-Aug 2	Promise Keepers Plus Adventure Atlanta
Sept.	10-14	National Quartet Convention-Louisville
Sept.	25-27	Women of Faith-Atlanta
Oct.	6-16	Rural New England in the Fall (limited seats)
Nov.	7-21	Christmas in Branson
Dec.	1-6	Christmas in the Smokies (limited seats)
Dec.	15-18	Opryland Christmas-Nashville

ALL DEPARTURES FROM JACKSON & ALL EXPENSES PAID

COLLEGE AND SEMINARY NEWS

1. **William Carey Theater** will be presenting two dinner theater musicals in June and July: *Smoke on the Water Homecoming*, June 12-28; and *Red Hot and Cole* July 8-19. Reservations should be made well in advance beginning June 2. Admission is \$25, which includes buffet meal, program book, and show. For reservations call (601) 318-6221.
2. **Southern Seminary, Louisville**, recognizes five spring graduates with Mississippi ties: Jacqueline Mariah Frantz, Master of Divinity, Columbus; Stanley Murry Huddleston, Master of Divinity, Ashland; Jason T. Klammer, Master of Divinity, Madison; Anthony P. Langley, Master of Divinity, Moss Point; and Justin G. Pickering, Master of Divinity, Laurel.
3. **New Orleans Seminary** recognizes its May 17 graduates with Mississippi ties: Michael Chadwick Gaddis from Forest received the certificate in church music from Leavell College; Elizabeth Ann McGee Ezelle from Decatur received the certificate in preschool and children's ministry from Leavell College; Nancy Bleakley from Vicksburg received the certificate in women's ministry from Leavell College; Kimberley Jo Black from Vicksburg received the bachelor of arts in Christian Ministry degree from Leavell College; Jeremy Jones from Jackson received the master of music in church music degree at NOBTS; Chris Gaskin from West Point received the master of arts in missiology degree at NOBTS; Paul Gregory Bland from Allen received the master of arts in Christian education degree at NOBTS; Joel Brister from Bogue Chitto received the master of arts in Christian education degree at NOBTS; Amanda Price Denton from Picayune received the master of arts in Christian education degree at NOBTS; Jeremy Montgomery from Picayune received the master of arts in Christian education degree at NOBTS; Marsha Price from Baldwin received the master of arts in Christian education degree at NOBTS; Andrew Wayne Chance from Prentiss received the master of divinity degree at NOBTS; David Carl Perkins from Hernando received the master of divinity with

specialization in Christian thought degree at NOBTS; Ronald Wayne Cook Jr. from Magee received the master of divinity with specialization in psychology and counseling degree at NOBTS; Clinton Allen Miller from Smithdale received the master of theology degree at NOBTS; Kay Bennett from Kokomo received the doctor of ministry degree at NOBTS; Ken Regan from Laurel received the doctor of ministry degree at NOBTS; Brett Golson from Columbia received the doctor of philosophy degree at NOBTS; and Lawrence Scott Hanberry from Hattiesburg received the doctor of ministry degree at NOBTS.

4. **William Carey University** will present Preview '08 July 11 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. on the Hattiesburg campus. Prospective students will learn about admissions, scholarship opportunities, financial aid, and student life at Carey. Breakfast will begin at 9 a.m. in the Smith Auditorium followed by opening remarks at 9:30 a.m. and a student information session at 10 a.m. A parent information session will begin at 10 a.m. in the Kresge Room. Campus tours begin at 10:45 a.m. and lunch and a student activities fair will be held on Commission Drive at 11:30 a.m. Students can register for classes and meet with advisors at 12:30 p.m. Students must RSVP before July 7. For more information about Preview '08 or to obtain admission materials, call (601) 318-6103 or (800) 962-5991 ext. 103 or visit the website at www.wmcarey.edu.
5. Directed by **Mississippi College** music faculty members Carol Joy Sparkman and Robert Knupp, the third annual MC summer music camp is set for July 6-12 on the Clinton campus. Students from grades 7-12 will study voice, enhance their keyboarding skills, attend classes and take part in an honors recital at the end of the week. Sponsored by the MC Department of Music, the cost is \$350 per camper, including a stay in MC residence halls, meals and other expenses. For more information on the Mississippi College summer music camp, contact the MC Department of Music at (601) 925-3440 or email music@mc.edu.

Mississippi Baptist Minister Hosts:

Classic European Tour

13 Days from \$1999*

Departs March 20, 2009 - Start in Paris - End in Rome

Travel with other Southern Baptists and your chaplain, Baptist Minister Rev. Billy Williams. This will be Rev. Williams' sixth trip as a YMT Baptist Chaplain. Baptist services will be available some days on tour for those in the group who wish to participate. Rev. Williams has been serving for 49 years as a Baptist minister, 23 years of which he was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Gautier, Mississippi. He is currently active in Broadmoor Baptist Church in Madison, Mississippi. Your group will start in Paris (3 nights) and see the historic Eiffel Tower, spectacular Louvre Museum, and world-famous Notre Dame cathedral. Next, you'll travel through beautiful French and Swiss alpine landscape. In Geneva (2 nights), enjoy a city tour that includes a guided tour of the Red Cross Museum. Visit the village of Sisteron, a town founded over 4,000 years ago by the Romans. Enjoy romantic Nice (2 nights) on the beautiful French Riviera. Tour Nice's Notre Dame Church and sightsee in the village of Eze for a visit to the Fragonard Perfume Factory. Travel along the Italian-Mediterranean coast to Montecatini-Terme (2 nights) before your drive through scenic Tuscan countryside en route to see the Leaning Tower in Pisa. Stop in Florence and spend the entire day exploring the city including a visit to the Duomo, Florence's famous cathedral. Enjoy city tours of medieval Siena and eternal Rome, including the Vatican Museum, Sistine Chapel, and St. Peter's Basilica. *Price includes European, English-speaking escort; quality hotels with private bath; 16 meals; motor coach sight-seeing; per person / double occupancy. Add \$259 tax, service & gov't fees. Airfare is extra. Add \$1,100 for current airfare from Gulfport/Biloxi; Jackson; Memphis; Birmingham; Baton Rouge; or Mobile.

For information, brochure & letter from Rev. Williams call:

YMT Vacations Affordable travel since 1967! 1-800-736-7300

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOLS

1. **Euclatubba Church, Saltillo:**
June 16 - 20, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

GREAT NATION INVESTMENT CORP. FIRST MORTGAGE CHURCH BONDS

EARN UP TO: 8%

These bonds may be placed in a self-directed IRA. Transfers and rollovers accepted, in most cases.

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Benton, AR 72018-1302 Fax 501-316-3110

Please send me information on the First Mortgage Church Bonds currently being offered by Great Nation Investment Corp.

LifeWay to offer background screening for workers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — How vulnerable are the children and youth of your church to volunteers or staff with criminal histories? Can staff members at your church confidently look a young mother in the eye and say everything possible has been done to make sure her child is safe?

"Of all the crimes against children in the U.S. every year, thousands will occur within the walls of churches and youth centers," said Matthew Robbins of Backgroundchecks.com. "With crime and abuse at an all-time high, churches must develop hiring programs that work to prevent dangerous situations before they occur."

Because Southern Baptist churches are autonomous, the responsibility to provide safe, responsible employees and volunteers falls on the local church.

"Background screening will assist in making decisions that prevent placement of people in situations that could lead to them committing an illegal act that will harm a minor and ultimately hurt the trust that communities place upon organizations that have pledged to protect that trust," Robbins said.

Through an agreement between LifeWay Christian Stores and Backgroundchecks.com, churches have access to discount screening services, Robbins said.

Because most criminal records are kept at three levels — federal, state and county — Backgroundchecks.com has compiled a proprietary database called US OneSEARCH, the largest national criminal conviction database publicly available.

The program offers services ranging from motor vehicle record screening to education and employment verification.

Background screenings may be helpful, but they also must fall within legal guidelines, Robbins noted.

"While it is very important to create and execute a thorough plan for protection against violence or crimes against children and workers, organizations must be mindful

of consumer rights as well," he said. "Backgroundchecks.com provides support by promoting strict adherence to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, which was put in place to protect consumers from misuse of their background information."

Some pastors or hiring committees may feel uncomfortable performing background checks on volunteers or staff members, but the consequence of not performing these checks can be devastating, Robbins explained.

"It is unfortunate that

everyone must be checked out before they are given trust or confidence in their goodwill, especially when they are only trying to give back to the community through the giving of themselves to support a ministry," he said, "but child protection statistics tell a gruesome story that needs to change."

Information on LifeWay Christian Stores' OneSource program is available at www.lifeway-stores.com/backgroundchecks.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
copyrighted 2005

IMZ KUHO DPUJIM MUJ
IU OZKRYZH IMZ LUOKW
UGI UB IZCEINIRUPX,
NPO IU HZXZHYZ IMZ
GPVGXI GPIU IMZ ONW
UB VGOLCZPI IU TZ
EGPRXMZO.

XZAUPO EZIZH IJU: PRPZ

Clue: : M = H

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: First John Five Two

MS POSITIONS

FBC OF EUPORA, MISS. IS NOW accepting resumes for the position of youth minister. Send resumes to fbceyouth@gmail.com. or FBC-Search, P.O. Box 268, Eupora, MS 39744.

WANTED: PINEVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH, Clinton, MS is seeking individual for part-time interim minister of music or part-time minister of music for blended Worship service. Please send resume to Pineview Baptist Church, 1288 Clinton-Raymond Road, Clinton, MS 39056 or email to Pineviewbc@bellsouth.net. Or fax your resume to 601-924-8378.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Parkview Baptist Church, Greenville, Miss., is seeking a full-time minister of music. Please send resume to personnel committee, 712 McAllister St., Greenville, MS 38701, or email to parkviewp@bellsouth.net.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. North Winona Baptist Church, Winona, Miss., is seeking a full-time minister of music. Please send resume to North Winona Baptist Church, attn: music search committee, 602 Alberta Drive, Winona, MS 38967. Or email to nwbc@duckwood.net.

TWO POSITIONS: CENTRAL BAPTIST Church, Brookhaven, Miss., is accepting resumes for a full-time minister of music/outreach & full-time minister of students/college. Send resumes to 749 N. Jackson Street, Brookhaven, MS

39601 or email to questions@cbbc-brookhaven.org.

FBC CORINTH, MISS., IS SEEKING A full-time minister of preschool & children. Send resume to FBC, c/o search committee, 501 Main St., Corinth, MS 38834.

SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH, MARSHALL County, Miss. Seeking part-time youth director with potential for growth. Please send resume to search committee, P.O. Box 734, Potts Camp, MS 38659.

FBC, RIDGELAND, MISS., IS ACCEPTING resumes for ministry/financial assistant. Submit resume to FBC, personnel committee, 302 W. Jackson Street, Ridgeland, MS 39157 or email to stewart@epaofms.com.

NEEDED: PIANIST FOR MT. MORIAH Baptist Church, Marwood Loop, Bogue Chitto, Miss. This is a salary position. For more information call 601-833-8858 or 601-810-6149.

YOUTH MINISTER NEEDED: MT. MORIAH Baptist Church, Lincoln county, is seeking a youth minister. For more information, please send resume, with at least 5 references, to search committee, Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, 814 Marwood Loop, SE, Bogue Chitto, MS 39629, 601-833-8858.

HOPEWELL BAPTIST CHURCH, CRYSTAL Springs, Miss., is seeking a full-time pastor/minister to lead our church. Please send resume to Hopewell Baptist Church, 2002 Hopewell Rd., Crystal Springs, MS 39059, attn: Bill Robinson. Or email to bill@sewman.net.

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

- Harmony Church, Lincoln Association:** Homecoming, June 8; services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and music by Clear Mountain Quartet, 1 p.m.; Wiley Reid, speaker; Phil Hemby, music.
- Eden Church, Yazoo:** Revival, June 8 - 11; Sun., 10 a.m., followed by lunch and music; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; B.J. Bennett, speaker; Albert Gray, pastor.
- Rock Bluff Church, Puckett:** Revival, June 8 - 11; Sun., 10:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Emerson

Tedder, Darby Combs, Scott Walters, and Norris Able, speakers; Donnie and Cynthia Stuart, music.

- Philadelphia Church, Caseyville:** Homecoming, June 8; worship, 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch; Mack Massey, speaker; Bendon Ginn, pastor.

- First Church, Belzoni:** Revival, June 22 - 25; Sun., 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Jad Khalaf, speaker; R.L. and Beth Sigrest, music; George C. Johnson, pastor.

- Laurel Hill Church, Neshoba County:** Homecoming, June 8; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by potluck meal, fellowship, and singing; Tony Henry, speaker; Larry Winstead, music; Hugh Martin, pastor.

- Bethel Church, Monticello:** Homecoming, June 8; services, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch and gospel singing featuring The Hearn Family and Calm Assurance, 1:30 p.m.; Paul Smith, speaker.

1119 Mississippi Churches Can't Be Wrong.

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Wellington Associates, Inc.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Three Rules for Working Smart

Proverbs 6:1-15

By Janice H. Fortenberry

As a child, I could sleep late on Saturdays but once up, I had two choices: Work or work. My mother owned a beauty shop and my dad a hardware store. So I could choose to mix shampoo and fold mountains of little white towels or write up sales tickets for chicken feed and plumbing fittings. Both my parents grew up dirt poor, and work for them was a way of life.

King Solomon must have known something about work because he referenced it in six chapters of Proverbs (including this week's focal passage). He records in chapter 6 three rules for working in ways that will bring fulfillment, not drudgery.

In Proverbs 6:1-5 we are warned about legal arrange-

ments that put our families at risk. There are some who say the war in Iraq is the major issue in the upcoming Presidential election. I tend to think it's national and personal debt. According to data from the Federal Reserve, the national consumer debt level is now over \$937 billion, six times what it was as recently as the late 1980s. In short, many U.S. citizens have made living beyond one's means a lifestyle.

Solomon says in these verses that we are to work diligently to get out of and stay out of foolish financial traps. Is the irresponsible use of credit cards a financial trap? Yes, indeed. According to a recent article on MSN.Money, some 43% of American families spend more than they earn and



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personal bankruptcies have doubled in the past decade. Other traps include agreeing to pay off someone else's debt or co-signing a loan with someone who is on shaky financial ground.

Look at the urgent tone Solomon used in verse 4. Get out of these agreements, he said, before you fall asleep or even get sleepy. Another rule for working smart is found in verses 6-11. Solomon goes to nature for an analogy—the ant! Solomon takes aim at those who are lazy and won't work (v. 6). Ants, he said, gather food during the harvest and they do it without anyone having to tell them to (v. 7). In other words, they are motivated from within to wisely plan for the future. Granted, there are some people who are willing to work but cannot for a variety of reasons. Conversely, there are some of us who are consumed by work to the detriment of our families.

A well-balanced individual

seizes the opportunity to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done. If we don't, Solomon wrote, "poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man." (v. 11 NIV)

A third rule for working smart is to avoid wicked and dishonest dealings (v. 12-15) meant to bring harm to others. Notice in verse 13 that those who engage in these practices often do so in sly maneuvers, with signals not known to the innocent party. We're not sure if this reference to winking, signaling with the feet or a slight movement of a finger is based on specific signals business partners used to cheat a customer or if Solomon is referring to a deceitful attitude. Regardless, the outcome is the same: Harm is reaped due to unscrupulous business dealings.

You know the type and so do I. These people have an advantage over others in some way and use it to prey on those who aren't as well equipped. The stories are rampant: Property own-

ers unwittingly signing over mineral rights, the elderly unknowingly giving away estates and the young signing up for something that will encumber them for years.

Verse 15 is a Biblical reminder that what goes around comes around. "Disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will be suddenly destroyed — without remedy." (NIV)

One of the axioms I heard repeatedly from my parents on those "work or work" Saturdays was this: Anything honest is honorable. I have a new credit card. Can I afford this? Be honest about it or be prepared to suffer the consequences. I have a job to do. How should I do it? Do it to the best of my ability. I am about to do business with someone. How should I conduct myself? Do it in such a way that I can look them as squarely in the eyes the day after the transaction as I did the day before. And, in all three, remember that I am totally transparent to a loving — but just — God.

Fortenberry is a member of First Church, McComb.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Empowered to Help

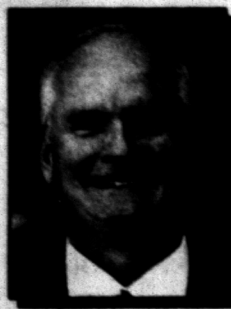
Acts 4:5-10, 12-13, 18-20, 31-35

By W. Wayne VanHorn

As we continue to study the Spirit's empowerment of our lives as believers, we focus on the aspect of witnessing that involves ministering to people. Witnessing is more than telling someone about Jesus; witnessing is sharing the love of Christ so people can experience him. Often people are not interested in what Jesus has done for them (his death and resurrection for their sins), until they experience what he can do for them now (alleviate their pain and suffering). The Holy Spirit empowers believers to minister to the physical and financial needs of people as part of their presentation of the good news.

1. Meeting Physical Needs (Acts 4:5-10)

Peter and John encountered a lame man as they went to the temple to pray. The man begged for money. Unable to work, the man depended on the kindness of others for money to buy his daily bread. Peter healed the lame man in the name of Jesus. Because Peter trusted the Lord to meet this man's physical need, about five thousand people were saved (Acts 4:4). Peter and John were arrested and brought before the Jewish leaders, who asked them, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" (Acts 4:7). The Jewish leaders felt threatened by the mass conversion of so many Jews to Christianity, the same fear that earlier resulted in their plot to kill Jesus (John 11:47-53).



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Peter used the occasion to witness for Jesus. He had power to witness about Jesus because he was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8). Without the Holy Spirit, Peter might have cowered before them; instead, he boldly declared the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the man they had crucified but whom God had raised.

2. Presenting Salvation (Acts 4:12-13, 18-20, 31)

By meeting the man's physical needs, Peter was given the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to the people and to their leaders. Peter proclaimed the exclusive role Jesus has in the salvation of humankind. His statement, "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved," flies in the face of current trends made popular by pop icons like Oprah Winfrey who suggest there are many ways to heav-

en, and Jesus is just one way. The Bible clearly teaches Jesus is the only way. Christians are compelled to share Jesus' love so they can come to the Father through him. Peter and John committed themselves to presenting the salvation available in Christ even when threatened. They told fellow believers how the religious leaders commanded them not to teach in Jesus' name and how they stood steadfast for Christ (Acts 4:18-20). The result was additional empowerment from the Spirit and boldness to speak the word of God (Acts 4:31).

3. Sharing Financial Resources (Acts 4:32-35)

The early church was both characterized and energized by helping the poorer members of society. The church took care of people! As people became part of the family of God, they took care of each other. Christians with money took care of Christians who were poor. The love they had for Jesus replaced any sense

of self-preservation. Just as Christ had given himself for their salvation, these early believers gave of themselves to help others. Needs were met. The apostles testified to the resurrection of Christ. People were saved.

Are those same things happening today? If not, the church today might want to consider returning to that winning formula for winning people to Jesus. Trust the Lord with your life. As he blesses you, share those blessings with others in need. Your kindness may be the very act that creates witnessing opportunities. The result could be the salvation of men and women. The eternal result will outlast any financial resources you shared along the way. Never forget the Lord has empowered you to help others.

VanHorn is dean of the School of Christian Studies & the Arts at Mississippi College and a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

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All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



3. West

1. First Church, Brandon, is hosting mini-sport and creative camps June 22-25, 6-8:30 p.m., including soccer, flag football, baseball, art, karate, drama, softball, basketball, cheerleading, and more. Register by June 20 at www.fbcbrandon.com or call (601) 825-6766.
2. Weir Church, Weir, will host Ann Downing in concert June 15, 6 p.m.
3. Ilze West, Auburn, Ala., was the guest speaker at the Women's Conference at Slayden Church, Slayden, Apr. 12. West was one of a family of 17 who were Holocaust survivors.

4. The wMu of Phillipston Church, Sidon, held an Easter parade recently with each lady making an Easter bonnet. Shown are the participants.
5. Sandersville Church, Sandersville, recognized two long-time deacons, George Smith and Preston Cooley, May 4, with Smith having served 17 years as music director and Cooley for 40 years as Sunday School director. Tim Sanford, pastor.
6. The men's ministry of Carterville Church, Petal, put a new roof on a house in Petal. Shown are Michael Mitchell and Frank Culpepper.



7. Slayden Church, Slayden



4. Phillipston Church, Sidon

7. The sanctuary and children's choirs of Slayden Church, Slayden presented The Cross Said it All Mar. 21-22. Shown are the participants.
8. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto, recognizes its high school and college graduates. Front row, Vickie Wilson and Tressie Hall; second row, Kellie Laird, Heather Roberts, Wade Price, and Steve Walther; third row, Brandi Green, youth director Jeff Freeman, and Adam McCaffery.

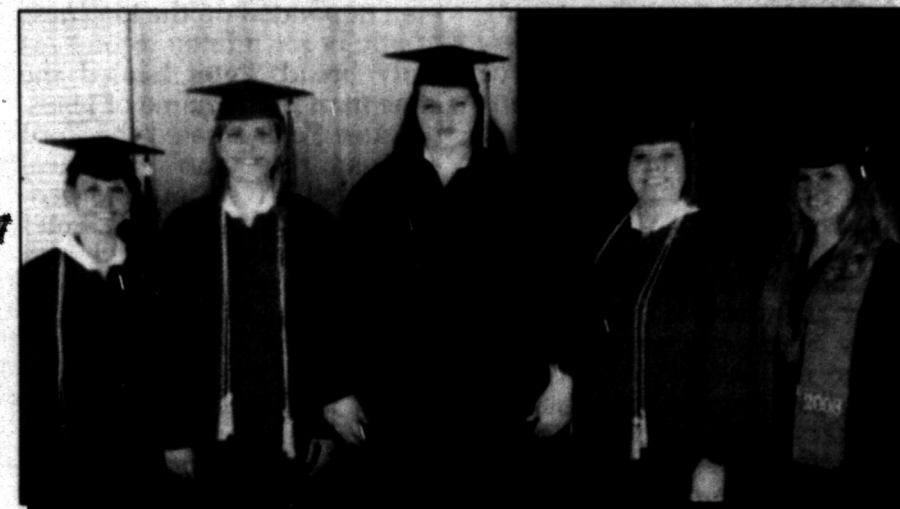


8. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto



5. Smith, Sanford, and Cooley

9. Parkway Church, Morton, recognized its graduating seniors: Candace Moore, Chelsea Palmer, Patricia Burkes, Crystal Massey, and Naomi Massey.
10. Camp Creek Church, Guntown, ordained Jimmy Hutcheson to the ministry Sept. 2, 2007. Hutcheson serves as youth minister. Shown are Donald Payne, pastor of Forrest Lake Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Hutcheson; and pastor Martin Jacks.



9. Parkway Church, Morton

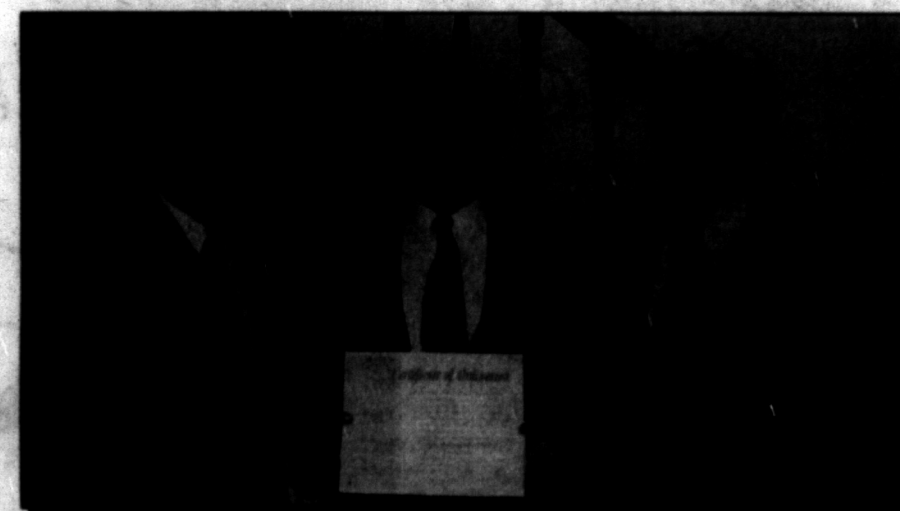


6. Mitchell and Culpepper



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10. Payne, Hutcheson, and Jacks